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Bard

AS IF IN A WINDOW

**We see the charms of the drummer
before we hear her drums**

**one day my name is cried
onto a slab of granite**

**so as you pass me by
in the silent summer of the dead**

**ask not what I looked like
but what I said.**

**18 February 2013
(awoke from dream with this, 8 AM)**

=====

**On the old bed table
a new Bible—
don't read it,
fondle it,**

**green leatherette
dangling ribbon to mark
an unread page,
fondle and remember.**

**A book like that
doesn't want reading,
it all happened long ago
and happened in you.**

Go to sleep with it in your hands.

18 February 2013

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**Because I tried to pry
a star off the bedroom ceiling
they taught me to fly**

**It was phosphorescent those days
and when the lights went out
the stars came on**

**But one star...what was it
with that one star that made me
fly off to heaven to fix,**

**had to lift it, adjust it, set it back
into what I knew was its proper place?
It is terrible when a star is wrong.**

18 February 2013

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**Running on the sidewalk
sitting on the curb. Wrong
wrong. Before you know it,
life of crime.**

**Forgive the lady for not smiling back.
Yes, the bank has too much money
but it's not your job to change
the situation.**

**Not yet. Walk slow, cross at the green,
read the Times when you grow up,
save your tears for the midnight pillow,
nobody cares how you feel.**

18 February 2013

SQUARE DANCE FOR DLS AT SIXTY

you knew how to get from the land
to the music
by way of the mind's eye

letting go.

I'm scared of the country
you come from, America,
the middle Buddha Family,
the White place

the food comes from there
and what do they buy
half so precious as the stuff they sell
the food, the silence of
the puszta savannah grasslands prairie steppe
the belt of quiet nourishment runs round the earth
between the 30th and 30th parallels

a terror in those places
I see the terror in your eyes
sometimes, forgive me for mentioning it,
part of the love I feel for you comes from a fear
a fear we share, but it's not the same fear
only the sharing is the same

a redbud tree in April on a Kansas lawn,

I am scared of America if the truth be told
this land of intelligent people busy being ignorant

how hard you have worked to wake them,
to make them see,

count the stitches on their sleeve
the dead men in their alleys

Davis Square in Somerville
a gang hit slumped against the black
mirror-black façade of the Bick,
the dawn finds him there
among the new bottles of delivered milk

the bread

the wheat

no quiero verla
as the man said before they shot him,
long before

And it seems to me your whole life you've told the truth

truth to the Man—

not the cops

or the banks

or the military

or the store-bought scholars

—too easy targets of our gnostic rage—

but the real Man, the authority

Culture claims for itself

deciding beauty and relevance and the good

by arcane invisible standards

warping the mind into consuming,

the Universal Unconscious Conspiracy

they call Art

and Entertainment.

How at the end of it

Olson came to Amoghasiddhi,

Green Buddha family of the north,

the knowing,

where love and hatred

cancel out in acts of pure knowing,

and there is no commodity but this instant

you have striven to keep clean for us.

And the worst thing money did

was capture innovation,
into the sickness of patent war and copyright,

dissolving the mind into matter

so that:

what shall we to to make new, *make it new*,

renew (Isou? Duchamp?
Debord?) so old our new men,

so long is our ago.

You know. You have stood
at the cabin door
pointing out into the wind,
that way. Away.

[18 February 2013...]

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**The moon is in a different sky tonight
the swell of her over the river
higher than ever—why has she discovered
a new road to go, and where will it take her?
Is she going to leave us after all these years
in some cruel new species of abandonment?**

18 February 2013

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[for the DLS piece]

The politics of poets
are sadly predictable.
They go against the grain
by habit and are proud of it

but do they always know
where the grain lies
and where it runs
and how to cut across it

or turn the natural back
upon itself to make
something really new?
Very very few.

Maybe Taliessin could, the old
magic bards rhythming out loud
on hillsides against some king
and all the soldiees fell down in a fit
when they heard that music speak in them.

What do any of us know

**except to holler and sneer and stab—
solicitous of our grants and gigs
we flail at tolerant enemies,
the sneering fascists, rich amateurs of golf.**

18 February 2013

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**No connection with what came before.
Bird flaps put of tree from which squirrel
also descends. It is not lyrical, it's generic,
proves nothing. Spinoza played at geometry
which proves nothing either, it only measures
but what it measures is the face of God
we see when we dare to close our eyes.**

19 February 2013

= = = = =

Proof in desuetude, enjoyment matters.

Some mistakes are fun to make

some tragical, some both.

Music is like that,

a gleaming bronze anvil falling from the sky.

If you think about it on your fingers

you can figure out how far heaven is.

19 February 2013

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**When you lead your goat
right through the produce section of Shop-Rite
prepare for unintended purchases.
You are responsible for your animal,
especially when near low-flying vegetables.
It says so in the Bible somewhere
or do I mean the Rights of Man?
No, I'm not being sarcastic, I'm just
mix things up a little starting with me.**

19 February 2013

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**The energy of after
saps the lover's dreams.
The imagination is exhausted
trying to keep pace with
what just happens and happens
by itself between them it seems
but there is no self
only this one and that one
falling into God, that dreamless sleep.**

19 February 2013

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**Getting close enough to get it wrong
that's more than consolation
it's a whole new alphabet**

**misspell all you like it still makes
sense to somebody, we're built that way—
once you're human, everything means.**

19 February 2013

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There are motions to go through
marble aisles in cemeteries
veiled urns to scare the living—

what is death like
that we want to build houses for it
sturdier than those that house the living?

I believe whatever I'm told, I read
the epitaphs and remember tomorrow
and wonder, just like all the living,

what my grave will say. And why
should a stone say anything at all?
Haven't I said enough already to the living?

19 February 2013

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**But what if the woman said yes?
Trees grew up all over Massachusetts
regardless, sugar barons humped their slaves
and American Exceptionalism came to town
guised as simple honest people killing turkeys.
If a nation believes in Almighty God long enough
it comes to think it is what it believes—
give me a country of nervous heretics,
sweet agnostics, men afraid to close their eyes.
From confidence comes cruelty.**

**The woman
did say yes, here I am, come visit me.
She's still here, waiting for real us to swim ashore,
people who know they're nothing special,
godless folk ready to work hard and be kind.**

19 February 2013

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**Broken fences
let animals through**

**we were them once
before a hammer
ever found our hands**

**without the sound it makes
when rock hits rock
how would we ever have
learned to speak?**

**A word is a thing.
It shapes the air,
makes something happen
in one who hears.**

**Now it is night in me
the world my only stone.**

19 February 2013

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**And if I had been a machine
this is the one it would have been**

**a table fan for the grasslands
plugged in but running only**

when someone came near enough to feel.

19 February 2013